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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT WEDNESDAY, March 6, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "COTTONS ON THE COUNTER." Information from Clarice Scott and Margaret Smith, Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Never mind how the chilly March winds blow. It's time to think about clothes for warm weather. For weeks already the stores have been displaying their summer fabrics. Now is a good time to look over their stock. The more you know about the new fabrics--how they wash, and how they wear, and what they cost--the easier it will be to plan a satisfactory summer wardrobe for yourself and the children.

You'll see plenty of cottons on the counters. Cottons became top-fashion last year, and they are continuing this season. You'll be right in style if you choose cottons for every garment from evening gowns to bathing suits. Manufacturers have done a good deal to improve cottons in recent years. Many of the cottons that used to shrink now are preshrunk. Others that used to crease and wrinkle badly like voile, and organdie, and gingham now come with a crease-resistant finish. Not all the cottons on the market have these new finishes. But many of them have. So before you buy, inquire.

Clothing specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics have been working with some of the new cottons and now offer some tips about them to help you in choosing summer clothes. They say many of the best new fabrics are improved varieties of old-time favorites like seersucker, pique, gingham, chambray, and madras; or lawn, batiste and organdie.

Of all the time-and-trouble-saving cottons, none can beat seersucker. Its crinkly weave is its great asset. The crinkle weave does away with ironing, and

it keeps seersucker from showing wrinkles. Seersucker is a blessing on laundry day. All you have to do with a seersucker dress is to wash it, shake it out and hang it to dry on a wooden hanger. It will be ready for wear as soon as it is dry. To save ironing ironing on hot summer days, use seersucker for the children's rompers, dresses, and suits, as well as for your own clothes. Seersucker is a boon to the traveller, too. A seersucker dress won't need pressing when it comes out of your suitcase. And you can wash it out the last thing at night and put it on first thing in the morning.

In grandmother's day seersucker was a humble fabric for housewear only. It still is ideal for house dresses but today it is a favorite for evening gowns, street and office dresses, and sports wear. The new seersuckers are softer than ever before, so more comfortable. They come in plaids, checks and stripes as well as plain colors. But here's a point to check on in buying seersucker. Be sure it has a firm weave. That doesn't mean it has to be thick and heavy. Just be sure it is firmly woven so when you stretch it between your hands it will spring back in shape and hasn't too much "give."

For street and office wear the darker plaid and striped seersuckers are both smart and practical. For summer evening wear the daintiest and most sensible material is a cross between seersucker and organdie--thin and crisp like organdie and crinkled like seersucker. This year you can buy it in flowered prints on soft blue or pink. The flowers look handpainted. A crinkled organdie dress washes very easily. Shake it straight and hang it on a hanger to dry. When it is dry, go over the seams with a warm iron. That's all the ironing it needs.

Another old-time cotton now a favorite for every occasion is pique. This year you can buy pique woven in wide and narrow stripes of different colors. For evening and afternoon wear a new embroidered eyelet pique has appeared. There is also a new flowered pique. But for sportswear pure white pique is as trim and smart and practical as ever.

Gingham and chambray and madras are old favorites out in new colors and designs. Gingham is one of the cottons you can now buy preshrunk with a crease-resistant finish. You'll find many cool British checked ginghams and Scotch plaids.

Chambray and madras are some of the most comfortable and serviceable cotton for sports, street and office wear, because they are soft and firmly woven. They wash and iron beautifully. But they do wrinkle. Many of the new tailored dress-and-jacket outfits this year are of chambray and madras. These fabrics now come in what the stores call "smoky tones" suggesting light through a fog, or a semi-blackout. They also come in huge checks of odd South American colors.

Among the less expensive cottons, voile, lawn, batiste and percale still hold their own. Some lawns and voiles now have a crease-resistant finish. Batiste this year is appearing in flower prints on pink and blue backgrounds. The new "old-fashioned" nightgowns and negligees trimmed with lace are of flowered batiste. Batiste is very soft and comfortable for nightwear and it costs little.

Now if you should want a summer coat of cotton, take your choice of pique, or one of the rough loose-weave cottons, or light-colored corduroy. All wash nicely.

Well, this is just a brief review of some of the cottons on sale this spring. But perhaps it will give you an idea of how you can use cotton in attractive and serviceable clothes for yourself and the family.

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